

EXHIBIT A

Islip managers' raises legal, but not transparent

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Body

The Town of Islip earlier this year tried to sneak through a series of raises for management employees. The town will quibble with the word sneaked, saying a majority of the town board voted openly to transfer funds.

"Nobody said boo" about the board's action, Supervisor Angie Carpenter said in an interview Monday.

Of course not.

Because the board - minus one absent member - masked votes to significantly raise salaries for several high-ranking town employees behind a high brush of budget-speak. The hikes came two months after the town board had increased the 2016 budget.

The biggest increase, of \$45,000, went to Tom Owens, who runs the public works and parks department, whose salary increased to \$146,000.

The others went to Director of Labor Relations Arthur Abbate, who's also the town's personnel director and safety officer, who went from \$90,000 to \$120,000; Comptroller Joseph Ludwig, who went from \$101,000 to \$120,000; Director of Industrial Development Bill Mannix, from \$101,000 to \$115,000; Environmental Control Commissioner James Heil, from \$101,000 to \$108,000, and Tax Assessor Anne Danziger, who went from \$101,000 to \$120,000. Danziger joined the town in September.

Carpenter's chief of staff, Tracey Krut, in moving up from executive assistant, jumped from \$83,000 to \$101,000.

These are hefty increases, justifications for which Islip residents deserved to hear voiced out loud during a public meeting - especially in a town that's considering a 2017 budget that would bust the state property tax cap by increasing taxes by 9.9 percent.

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Instead, the town masked the raises, which always are politically sensitive, as "budget-related transfers" - a tactic that left residents attending the public meeting in the dark.

Carpenter defended each salary increase, along with the town's decision to bring on two new commissioners at salaries higher than those of the commissioners they replaced. The town's new planning and airport commissioners, combined, make \$48,000 more than their predecessors.

Carpenter said Islip needed to be competitive with other towns to attract talent. She said the proposed 9.9 percent property tax increase for next year was necessary because the town was working to complete a variety of capital and other projects.

But the town would have done better to make its case for raises in public, especially at a time when Long Islanders are questioning the integrity and honesty of government.

Carpenter said the process was clear.

But it wasn't transparent, which is why she's coming under fire from residents over the raises.

But, Carpenter said, she's learned a lesson.

"In the future, I'll tell you this: I will be more clear, so I don't have this situation again," she said.

Which always is the best course of action.

Graphic

Islip Town Supervisor Angie Carpenter discusses raises Thursday. John Roca

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